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# WAR AND HUMAN EVOLUTION: GERMANIZED

BY VERNON KELLOGG

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THE causes and alleged justifications of wars have been nearly as various as the wars have been numerous. The habit of the flag in following commerce and missionaries and tourists has been a great, and, from the point of view of some ambitious diplomats and rulers, very useful cause of war. Fishermen and the fish in the sea have been causes; exploration has been helpful. Taxes and tea and fair representation; language and race and the growth of colonies have been causes less trivial.

But I have learned since this war began that all these causes and justifications alike are trivial in the face of *the* great cause, the fundamental cause and the full justification of all war. I have learned all this from a fount of wisdom than which, in the opinion of the fount, there is no more copious nor blessed nor disinterested flow of knowledge and wisdom from human sources. I have learned it from the Germans.

Also I have learned the full answer to a little problem that has troubled evolutionists for some time; the problem of the chief cause and directive control of human evolution. This knowledge also has been given me by the Germans.

In books about war and its relation to the evolution of man, especially in books written by Germans, I had often read the somber declarations that war takes the place in human life that the rigid and ruthless Darwinian struggle for existence holds among the lower animals, and that the Spencerian survival of the fittest, as applied to human groups, was to be determined chiefly, if not solely, by the outcome of wars to extinction. Also that this struggle and sur-

vival are the chief factors in all evolution, including the evolution of man.

Hence war is natural, it is inevitable, and is, indeed, to be welcomed as the necessary final test of the value of the different lines of development and organization of human life and society represented by various existing human groups.

I had read this, I say, in German books and heard it in lectures in German universities by benevolent-looking elderly professors devoted, in practice, to most peaceful occupations in households, classrooms and beer restaurants. But it was not until I had lived in and traveled about all over German-occupied Belgium and France, seeing and hearing many incredible things, and had spent days and nights and weeks and months of much talk and enlightenment at German Great Headquarters in a French village on the banks of the Meuse—that beautiful stream that flows by such towns of experience and knowledge as Dinant, Namur and Liège—that I truly realized that what I had read in German books about war, and heard in German classrooms, was not just words and play at logic, but the expression of a conviction of belief, the reasoned acceptance of a terrible and fatal philosophy, so widely and thoroughly spread among a whole people as to give this people bodily into the hands of a few leaders who represented the technical knowledge necessary to success in this great all-deciding human struggle for existence. It is a philosophy that makes war and slaughter and rapine desirable, and justifies in the conduct of war every form of cruelty and deceit, and all surrender of personal humane and moral standards; a philosophy that puts man's position and behavior and his evolutionary struggle back, not into medieval times, as has been sometimes said, but into prehistoric, Glacial time, when a half-beast, half-man type was all of man that the earth knew. In that time, undoubtedly, man, naked, hairy, stooping, was only an animal among animals, and at the mercy, for his persistence, of the outcome of sickening struggles of brute strength and brute cunning against other brute strength and cunning.

But, as has been well said by Liberty Hyde Bailey, what we have done in times past shows the way by which we have come; it does not provide a programme of procedure for days that are coming, or, if it does, then we deny the effective evolution of the race. Yet that this Glacial Time condition of human evolution still holds today in all its crass tigerishness,

is the present German attitude. The German people have been brought to this attitude, and held in it, by virtue, or, rather, vice, of the combination of a philosophic acceptance of the mutual fight principle as opposed to the mutual aid principle, and of a deliberate, selfish cultivation by the rulers and leaders of the nation, for the sake of their own persistence in despotic power and the persistence of hereditary autocratic government, of the conditions of military control and military exaltation which enable these leaders easily to dictate the actual thinking and expression and behavior of the whole people.

It is a vivid illustration of the danger of a combination of a little knowledge, but not enough, and of a deliberate exercise of the "will to believe" despite sufficient knowledge to warrant non-belief. The great mass of the people of Germany illustrate the first element of the combination; the intelligent and really educated classes, the "intellectuals," the other.

A favorite argument of these intellectuals in justification of war and the German method of carrying on war is the argument drawn from biology and evolution. But this argument is always based on certain assumed premises. Most important of them is the complete acceptance of the idea that evolution is solely determined by a rigorous and ruthless struggle for existence of the most combative type.

Now, let us remember, even before we criticize the validity of this utterly brutal evolution conception, especially in its relation to human evolution, that this modern German visualization of it is not even the idea of the great founder of it. For of the struggle for existence Darwin says: "I use this term in a large and metaphorical sense, including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny." This is, indeed, far from the present-day scientific philosophy so passionately invoked by the German natural philosophers as the biologic basis of advantage—phrased in German war parlance as "military necessity." Any softness in such a struggle is a surrender of natural advantage and denotes a weakness on the part of the soft-hearted contender. As the struggle is between groups, the fate of individuals does not count. As it is a struggle of Darwinian type in its Germanized form it is a struggle to the death.

Are Belgians in the way? Brush them aside. Is there an apparent opportunity to use them in the struggle? Make slaves of them. Is it easier to profit by these slaves by removing them by force from their homes into the factories in Germany? Do it, even though women weep and children shriek. Do these slaves, for some absurd reason of personal honor, of loyalty to principle and to country, refuse to work in these factories devoted to making the things which are to help sow death among their brothers and fathers and friends and their Allies on a battle front? Then punish them by exposure in concentration camps, and by beating and starvation—especially starvation, for that saves food. And if, as a result of the obstinacy of the slaves, and hence the necessary continuance of the beating and starvation until the victims are in a physical condition when work is an impossibility, even if their spirits were sufficiently broken, then send them back as physical wrecks or corpses to their distracted families, to be cared for. A single cattle train brought two hundred and fifty-five of these slave wrecks from Aachen to Antwerp in March of this year. It took forty-eight hours to make the few miles—German transportation is not what it was—and there was no food for the men during this time. The American Relief representatives met them with bread at Antwerp. But it was a little late. Every one of these men was removed from the train on a stretcher. On fifty of these stretchers the men were dead. They did not die simply from forty-eight hours' lack of food. They died from a three months' experience of the practical application of Germany's philosophy of war and of human evolution on the basis of the struggle and survival factors.

In October (1917), six hundred and eighty Belgian children arrived in Evian-les-Bains on a single train; they were all between the ages of four and twelve; they were emaciated and sickly, and they were alone—no mothers, no big sisters, no fathers. They were sent out of Belgium by the Germans to Switzerland and thence to France to be cared for. Two-thirds of them had been taken from their parents because their fathers would not work for the German army and were being starved into submission, and the mothers were willing to let their children go rather than see them starve, too. Think of that line of weak little motherless things, climbing down from the train and marching along the platform as bravely as they could, into the hands of kindly, but unknown, foster-

mothers and big sisters. Can you picture any more incredible and poignant sight in all the war? Well, that sight was just another incident in the practical working out of Germany's war philosophy.

This is no live-and-let-live philosophy, you see. In fact, it is not a kind by the side of which live-and-let-live philosophies can even exist; their holders would fall easy prey to the tiger philosophers.

Finally, it is not a philosophy which recognizes anything in man and in human evolution sufficiently different from what is in the lower animals and their evolution to make it necessary to revise in any way the conception of evolutionary control as worked out in the study of lower creation in order to apply it directly and rigorously to human life. This philosophy does not recognize the distinction we make when we say, "Man has responsibilities quite apart from the conditions that obtain in the lower creation. Man is a moral agent; animals and plants are not."

This philosophy seems to take no account of the extent and importance in human life of what may be called man's social evolution as contrasted and often in conflict with his natural evolution. We live in a state of social advancement and moral refinements far beyond those dictated by our stage of natural evolution. We do this on a basis of an elaborately constructed social and moral fabric into which each individual is fitted after birth by association and education, by precept and corrected practice. Is all this laboriously acquired advance of man over the lower animals, built up on moral self-consciousness, and ever, in turn, resulting in more of it, to be taken into no account? Is all this to be thrown aside for the sake of a sophisticated, over-driven, biological, dehumanized, mechanistic philosophy of tiger evolution that would put us back five hundred thousand years into the Glacial Time conditions of our half-beast, half-man ancestor? Yet that is exactly what the German natural philosophers and the German war philosophy maintain.

As zoölogist I knew something about the importance of the mutual aid principle as a factor in biologic success and evolutionary advance, even among the lower animals. As student of human evolution and man of a little scientific education, even though some of it was got in Germany, I know enough about the biology of the human species to be confident that I have evidence and reason on my side when I say

that you cannot settle all, nor even many, of the problems of human biology by a swift reference of them to the categories of half-solved problems of tiger biology.

We must not be carried off our feet by the fascination of the solution by origins. We may have originated from tiger ancestors, and we may, from a rigorously evolutionary point of view, differ from them now only quantitatively. But this quantitative difference is already so enormous, so extreme, that for all practical purposes it may be treated as qualitative. Speech, writing, tradition, education and mental and moral self-consciousness have made us and our evolutionary trend very different from tigers and tigerish evolution. If the Germans wish to cling to Glacial Time conditions and behavior, let them, but strictly within the confines of their own land. Let them not insist on carrying this prehistoric *Kultur* by force of tooth and claw into other lands.

We should like to be beyond war. But we cannot be so long as Germany is not and looks on our aspiration as a weakness to be taken advantage of. Unfortunately there can be but one answer to a people that insists on success in war as the criterion of racial advancement, and as the most important factor in human evolution. We have to accept, for the moment, the challenge to bloody debate. But when we have debated the matter in this horrible way, and have won, let us see to it that the winning is the last one of its kind necessary.

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